

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 EUR-12 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 IO-13
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O P 120610Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9015
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 5631

FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: OVIP (NEWSOM, DAVID D.)
SUBJ: YOUR VISIT TO KABUL

1. PRIOR TO HOUR ARRIVAL, MY STAFF AND I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE
SOME LAST-MINUTE THOUGHTS ABOUT THE LOCAL SCENE AND ON THE
ATMOSPHERICS YOU ARE LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER DURING YOUR VISIT HERE.

2. YOU WILL FIND KABUL PEACEFUL AND SEEMINGLY UNRUFFLED BY
THE REVOLUTION OF APRIL 27. THINGS ARE, HOWEVER, DIFFERENT
AND YOU WILL NOTICE SOME OF THIS. TEN TANKS GUARD RADIO
AFGHANISTAN JUST ADJACENT TO THE EMBASSY. A STRICTLY ENFORCED
11:00 PM - 4:00 AMLCURFEW IS A CONSTANT REMINDER THAT ALL IS
NOT NORMAL.

3. YOU ARE SLATED TO MEET PRESIDENT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY
COUNCIL TARAKI (60 YRS OLD) AND FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN
(50 YRS OLD), AND YOU SHOULD FIND THESE SESSIONS INTERESTING.
TARAKI WAS ONCE AFGHAN PRESS ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON AND
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AFTERWARDS SERVED FOR A BRIEF TIME AS TRANSLATOR AT THIS
EMBASSY. AMIN STUDIED FOUR YEARS ('56-'58, '63 - '65) AT
COLUMBIA TEACHERS COLLEGE UNDER USAID AUSPICES, EARNED AN
MA, BUT FAILED TO COMPLETE HIS DOCTORATE. IN EARLY JUNE,
WHEN AMIN WAS IN NEW YORK CITY FOR THE SSOD, HE TOOK TIME
OFF TO CALL ON ONE OF HIS OLD PROFESSORS.

4. TARAKI AND AMIN THUS SPEAK ENGLISH WELL AND KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THE U.S. YOU WILL FIND THEM FRIENDLY -- BUT CAUTIOUS. AFTER SPENDING YEARS STEEPED IN CLANDESTINE INTRIGUE AND MARXISB-LENINIST IDEOLOGY, THEY ARE WARY OF THE U.S. AND ARE LIKELY TO BE HESITANT IN SHARING CONFIDENCZA WITH YOU. DCM AMSTUTZ HAS MET AMIN FOUR TIMES AND FOUND HIM SPARING OF WORDS. AS SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, HE IS A POWERFUL FIGURE IN THE NEW REGIME AND RANKS NEXT TO TARAKI IN THE CIVILIAN SIDE OF THE POWER STRUCTURE. AS FOR TARAKI, THE DCM HAS SEEN HIM JUST ONCE (WITH AMB ELIOT) AND FOUND HIM MOJE VOLUBLE AND WILLING TO TALK.

5. BY THE TIME YOU ARRIVE, TARAKI AND AMIN WILL HAVE COMPLETED A SUCCESSFUL MOVE TO EXILE LEADING MEMBERS OF THE PARCHAM (OR BABRAK) FACTION IN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY. AS YOU KNOW, INTERIOR MINISTER NOOR AHMAD NOOR -- A LEADING PARCHAMIST AND AN IMPRESSIVE INDIVIDUAL IN HIS OWN RIGHT -- HAS BEEN SENT TO WASHINGTON AS AMBASSADOR. HE DEPARTED KABUL ON JULY 11 AND WAS FRIENDLY WHEN I SAW HIM OFF AT THE AIRPORT, COMMENDING THAT HE AND I HAD A COMMON RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXPANDING RELATRGNS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE EXILE OF LEADING PARCHAMISTS WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR TARAKI AND AMIN TO SET THE PACE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE
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NEW REGIME'S PLANS. IT IS NOT CLEAR AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, HOW THESE DIFFER IN CONCRETE TERMS FROM THOSE THE EXILED LEADERS MIGHT HAVE HAD IN MIND. IN GENERAL, OUR READING IS THAT THE KHALQISTS UNDER TARAKI ARE MORE MODERATE AND PRAGMATIC THAN THEIR EXILED COLLEAGUES. I FIND IT INTERESTING THAT THERE IS NO AVAILABLE EVIDENCE THAT THE SOVIETS SOUGHT TO INTERVENE FORCEFULLY IN THIS INTERNAL DISPUTE, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT BABRAK HAD ASKED FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE SOVIETS WITH WHOM HE HAS BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT OVER THE YEARS. IF THIS INFORMATION IS CORRECT, IT WOULD TEND TO SUPPORT THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE SOVIETS ARE IN ACCORD WITH TAIUKI'S "GO-SLOW" APPROACH. TO BE SURE, THE SOVIETS MUST ALSO HAVE REALIZED THAT TARAKI IS AN ORGANIZATION MAN WHO PRESENTLY CONTROLS THE CRUCIAL ELEMENTS OF POWER WITHIN THE SYSTEM.

6. IN YOUR TALKS WITH TARWKI AND AMIN, I AM SURE THEY WILL AFFIRM TO YOU THEIR DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE. THEY WILL BE SINCE IN

SAYING THIS, FOR IT IS HUMAN NATURE TO EXPECT TARAKI

TO WANT TO RUN HIS OWN SHOW, IN HIS OWN COUNTRY. ON
THE OTHER HAND, PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HIM AND HIS LEFTIST
GOVERNMENT S NARROW AND TARAKI
MAY HAVE TO RELY ON THE
SOVIETS TO MAINTAIN POWER. THE NUMBER OF SOVIET
MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ADVISERS IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN TWO
AND THREE THOUSAND, AND IS ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT IN
THE AFGHAN MILITARY. AGREEMENTS WITH THE SOVIET UNION
ARE ANNOUNCED ALMOST EVERY OTHER DAY AND NOW NUMBER
OVER 30. NO OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRY CAN CITE MORE THAN
TWO AGREEMENTS.

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
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INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9016
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 5631

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT--PARAS EIGHT, TEN)

FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM

7. WERE A BELEAGUED TARAKI REGIME GIVEN TIME TO APPEAL
FOR SOVIET HELP, I HAVE LITTLE DOUBT AT THE MOMENT THAT
THE SOVIETS WOULD RESPOND POSITIVELY FOR REASONS THAT
TRANSCEND AFGHANISTAN ALONE. IT MUST REMAIN A CONSTANT
OBJECTIVE OF OURS TO KEEP THE SOVIETS FROM PLACING
SOVIET ARMED FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN FOR SUCH A DEVELOPMENT
WOULD REPRESENT A QUANTUM JUMP IN THE U.S.S.R.'S ABILITY
TO BRING PRESSURES TO BEAR ON PAKISTAN AND IRAN AND
HEIGHTEN THE CONCERNS OF OTHER FRIENDS AND ALLIES
REGARDING THE SOVIET UNION'S LONG-RANGE INTENTIONS.

8. I THINK IT ALSO IMPORTANT THAT YOU BE AWARE THAT

BOTH TARAKI AND AMIN ARE ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THEIR COUNTRY'S POVERTY AND BACKWARDNESS. THIS CONCERN CROPS UP CONSTANTLY IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS AND SPEECHES, AND THEY SEEM DETERMINED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. WHILE IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT LEFTIST DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL THE SECRET

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NEW LEADERS WILL WISH TO FOLLOW, THEY WANT IBRD, ADB AND IMF HELP, AS WELL AS AID FROM THE U.S. AND ANY OTHER DONOR. IN OUR PREOCCUPATION WITH THE FOREIGN POLICY RAMIFICATIONS OF THIS GOVERNMENT, AND THE REVULSION MANY OF US HAVE OVER THE HARSH TREATMENT METERED OUT TO LEADERS OF THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, IT IS EASY FOR US TO OVERLOOK THE CENTRAL COMMITMENT OF THE TARAKI GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF THIS DESPARATELY POOR PEOPLE.

9. ON THE INTERNAL SIDE, NO ECONOMIC CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED, ALTHOUGH MAJOR REFORMS SEEM SLATED FOR THE FUTURE. WHILE TARAKI'S PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS A PARTY STRUCTURE PATTERNED AFTER THAT OF THE SOVIET UNION AT THE TOP, ONE WOULD HAVE TO RANK THE DRA, AT THE MOMENT AT LEAST, AT THE MODERATE END OF ANY SCALE OF LEFTIST GOVERNMENTS.

10. ON THE EXTERNAL SIDE, IT IS THE SPECIAL PLACE THAT HAS BEEN ACCORDED THE SOVIET UNION BY THIS GOVERNMENT THAT IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN ON OUR PART, ON THE PART OF THE PAKISTANIS, THE IRANIANS, AND THE FREE WORLD IN GENERAL. SINCE TARAKI MAY ULTIMATELY HAVE TO DEPEND ON THE SOVIETS FOR HIS REGIME'S SURVIVAL, AND FOR A VAST AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE TO IMPLEMENT HIS PROGRAMS, HE MAKES HIS REGIME VULNERABLE TO MOSCOW'S DEMANDS FOR SPECIAL FAVORS. THE FORM THESE FAVORS MAY TAKE REMAINS TO BE SEEN AND WILL DEPEND TO SOME EXTENT ON THE OTHER OPTIONS THAT ARE OPEN TO HIM.

11. FINALLY, ON THE FOREIGN RELATIONS FRONT, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT UP TO NOW THIS GOVERNMENT HAS BY AND LARGE ESCHEWED TAKING POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL MATTERS.

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(DAYS CAN GO BY WITHOUT THE KABUL PAPERS CARRYING ANY ITEM OF FOREIGN NEWS COVERAGE.) THE FEW EXCEPTIONS -- NOTABLY AMIN'S POSITIONS AT THE HAVANA NACB MEETING AND AT THE NEW YORK SSOD -- SUGGEST, HOWEVER, A CLEAR AFFINITY

TO SOVIET POSITIONS. AP REGARDS MATTERS RELATING TO THE U.S., THE NEW REGIME HAS SO FAR AVOIDED CASTING ANY DIRECT BARBS OR CRITICISMS OUR WAY. AT OUR JULY 4 RECEPTION, AMIN, PLUS TWO OTHER CABINET MINISTERS AND EIGHT DEPUTY MINISTERS CAME, A LARGER NUMBER THAN AT ANY OF THE EARLIER POST-COUP NATIONAL DAY RECEPTIONS (INCLUDING THE CZECHS). WE INTERPRET ALL THIS AS A POSSIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF THEIR DESIRE NOT TO ANTAGONIZE THE U.S., AND POSSIBLY ALSO AS A DELIBERATE DECISION TO KEEP OPEN AN OPTION TO COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS.

12. HAVE A GOOD FLIGHT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THURSDAY NOON. BEST REGARDS.
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